FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ECU SCHOLARS GATHER IN LONDON, DISCUSS SIR WALTER RALEIGH

GREENVILLE, N.C. (Feb. 17, 2009) — The Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences at East Carolina University is seeking to promote research on the original explorations of the North Carolina coast fostered by Sir Walter Raleigh and undertaken by the college’s namesake Thomas Harriot.

In pursuit of this goal, following informal discussions between scholars at St. John’s College at the University of Cambridge in December 2007 and Thomas Harriot College in April 2008, professors Mark Nicholls of St. John’s College and Larry Tise of Harriot College invited Raleigh scholars from five nations to meet at the Tower of London this past January to discuss the status of research on Walter Raleigh and his world.

The Raleigh Research Circle, which includes 24 leading scholars of the period, gathered for two days of animated discussion held January 9-10 in Tower Hill at the Tower of London, where Raleigh spent the last 15 years of his life as a prisoner convicted of treason, and where he wrote the first volume of Historie of the World (1614).

“We were very fortunate that all of the Raleigh scholars we contacted – whether in the US, Canada, Britain, Germany or France – were eager to participate in this new endeavor,” says Tise, co-organizer of the conference. “This was probably the largest gathering of Raleigh aficionados (in this case, scholars actively researching portions of Sir Walter Raleigh’s life and career) since the day he was beheaded in the Old Palace Yard at Westminster in London on October 29, 1618.”

Topics of discussion during the conference included sessions on Raleigh’s life, beliefs, explorations and writings. A consensus emerged that critical analysis of Raleigh’s writings and works is needed. Not since 1829 have Raleigh’s works been published as a whole.

With the 400th anniversary of the publication of Historie of the World approaching in 2014, the Raleigh Research Circle agreed to collaborate and bring together Raleigh’s most important works, digitized, analyzed and critiqued.

Professor Frank Romer, Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Linguistics at ECU, will serve as general editor of the “Historie of the World” project. Professors Nicholls and Tise will serve as editorial directors. Along with contributions from other members of the group, Romer also will work in close collaboration with Robert Anthony, curator of the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

“He [Raleigh] played a significant role in Elizabethan life,” Romer said. “I was very glad there was interest and support getting his lesser works into print.”

For more information about the conference or the “Historie of the World” project, contact Tise at tisel@ecu.edu.

###